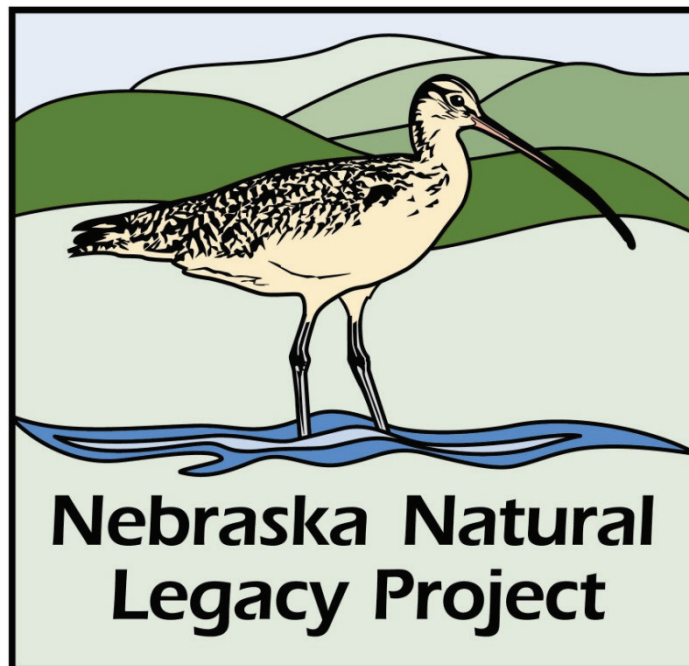


The Nebraska Natural Legacy Project



State Wildlife Action Plan

2nd edition

2011

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Melissa Panella, and Mark Humpert (Eds.)

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Numerous individuals contributed to the success of this endeavor.

Appendix 1 lists the members of the various teams that worked on the Nebraska Natural Legacy Project.

Acknowledgments

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Foreword

As Nebraskans, we value wildlife for many different reasons. Whether you are a hunter who is fervent about stalking a mule deer, an angler who lives for the thrill of catching a trophy, a birdwatcher who rises before the sun to see an elusive warbler, or simply a grandparent who looks forward to sharing a passion for butterflies with a child—wildlife is interwoven in the fabric of our culture. The animals and plants that make up Nebraska's natural legacy offer all of us a vital connection to our past, a resource to be enjoyed in the present, and a responsibility to conserve for future generations. The Nebraska Natural Legacy Project lays out a vision for conserving our state's rarest species while at the same time perpetuating the continued existence of more common species.

When the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission first began work on a state wildlife action plan (Nebraska Natural Legacy Project), we had to decide on an approach that would ensure we developed the best plan possible. The agency could have drawn only from the expertise of professional biologists, or alternatively sought input from a wide diversity of stakeholders. We decided to utilize both and what resulted was one of the largest collaborative efforts ever undertaken on behalf of wildlife in the state's history. Public input meetings, conservation practitioner workshops, and dozens of meetings with the state's biological experts and conservation and agricultural leaders has culminated in a proactive conservation plan that is based on the best available science and has a high probability for successful implementation.

This plan uses a comprehensive dataset to identify priorities for the conservation of the state's rarest species and natural habitats. It also provides a roadmap to guide conservation work in those landscapes that offer our greatest hope for conserving the full array of biological diversity. Through this process, we have significantly increased our understanding of species and habitats, identified critical threats to animals and plants, developed actions that will lead to conservation of Nebraska's biological diversity, and established a solid partnership approach.

A twenty-five member Partnership Team that represents the interests of Nebraska's conservation, agricultural, and Native American communities guides this planning process. The efforts of these individuals help ensure that this plan is supported by and useful to the majority of the state's citizens. The Partnership Team also provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and collaborative decision-making and raises the level of trust and respect amongst its participants. Many individuals have contributed to the development and implementation of Natural Legacy, as well as its revision.

In today's ever changing society, it's more important than ever that we have a plan for the future. Although we are headed towards uncharted waters, we now have a compass and a roadmap that better prepares us for the challenges ahead. The future for Nebraska's natural legacy looks bright.

Dr. Mark Pinkerton

Nebraska Game and Parks Commissioner